

FOLKS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD...

By **Michael Howard** - July 10, 2017



La Troupe Zetwal

The Marion Hopkinson playground in Brooklyn was the setting for a folk festival of international proportions recently when artists from Egypt, Haiti, Colombia South America, Pakistan, Ghana West Africa and down home Mississippi delta blues filled the air in the Ocean Hill section of the borough.

Beareather Reddy, who owns Big Eyed Enterprises, staged her second Big Eyed Blues festival this past June, namely the Ocean Hill Folk Festival in partnership with the Central Brooklyn Jazz Consortium, NYC Department of Cultural Affairs and local representatives.

The diversity of artists emphasized our welcomed blend to the borough's mosaic. Ghanaian Harold Akyeampong began with libations (the opening ceremony recognizing our ancestors), then toured the Motherland in poetry, prose and folktales. He later mentioned, "I'm going home soon, but hope to join the journalism class described on radio when I return"! Referring to the referenced Guerrilla Journalism workshop headed by Milton Allimadi.

Pakistani father and son team Aziz, sang and played the Egyptian drum called the Tabla, used mostly in the Middle East and North Africa.

Haitian dance troupe "La Troupe Zetwal" prompted audience participation as they performed fetes indigenous to the western hemisphere's first independent black nation.

WBGO radio personality Rob Crocker served as emcee for the day and kept a lively pace. The well traveled DJ has been in the business 40 years, lived and worked in Tokyo and Amsterdam for 9 of those years. Crocker said, "Richard Nixon became president and I moved to Holland... the industry changed...it's not what it used to be"! He introduced Egyptian Dance, a flowing sequence of costume and timbales, performed by Yasser Darwish. The blues came courtesy of the Michael Packer Tribute Blues Band with their renditions of "Flip, Flop, Fly" and "The Thrill is Gone". Enid Knight did a poetry reading, and a group called "Strings 'n Skins" delivered a spirited Pan African sound.



Beareather & bassist Stanley Banks

Beareather and the Brown Liquor Sounds closed out with "Voo Doo Woman" and the days organizer rocked the grounds and had a special message to the audience..."Next year is better and yours"! It was to let the neighborhood know that the event is family oriented and that their input is required.

Marion Hopkinson is a magnificently landscaped park, manicured and inviting, fit for special occasions (i.e., weddings, photo opportunities, etc.).

The audience appeared a little dismayed at the 5:30 closing – but rules are rules? Or not?

Art work displayed by Joe Grant, manager for Councilmember Joseph Cornegy, Create Bed-Stuy Initiative, added to the concert festivities.

Quest Sounds facilitated by Tom Fisher insured that the noise met the required decibels. The permit for sound obtained from the 73rd precinct indicated termination at 5 pm. Hope this rule is revisited, and last till dusk! Consensus here is reconsideration. The idea of a concert fixture is supported in the community; and the idea of block association involvement was expressed by the former president. A true folk festival at the Marion Hopkinson Playground in Ocean Hill, that includes ALL!

Michael Howard

Michael Howard is a founding member of Guerrilla Journalism and enjoys covering jazz concerts and profiling the musicians.
